

beneath the body pale dusky green, somewhat darker on the breast and sides; uropygium yellowish-green.
Three specimens of this species are contained in the British Museum, exhibiting male, female, and young.

2. AGLAIA VITTATA.

Tanagra vittata, Temm. Pl. col.

Maldonado; not common.

PIPILO PERSONATA. Swains.

PLATE XXXV.

P. personata, Swains. Two cent. and a quart. p. 311.

Maldonado; not common. The stomach of one, which I shot, contained seeds.

EMBERIZOIDES POLIOCEPHALUS. G. R. Gray.

E. olivaceus, dorsi plumis medio nigro striatis; capite gulâque cinereis, priore plumis singulis, medio nigrostriatis; corpore infra rufescenti albo; hypochondriis tectricibus caudæ inferioribus obscurioribus; alarum margine latè flava, remigibus primariis secundariisque nigris; prioribus pallidè olivaceo, posterioribus olivascente flavo latè marginatis.

Long. tot. 7½ unc.; ala, 3½; cauda, 4; tarsi, 1½; rostri, 8 lin.

Olivaceous, with the feathers of the back marked down the middle with black; the head and throat cinereous, with each feather of the former streaked down the middle with black; beneath the body rufous white, darker on the flanks and under tail coverts; the border of the wings bright yellow; the secondaries and primaries black, the former broadly margined with pale olive, the latter with bright olivaceous yellow; base of bill dusky orange.

Habitat, northern shore of the Plata. (May and August.)

This bird is common both near Monte Video and Maldonado, in swamps. Stomach full of seeds: it makes a shrill loud cry: its flight is clumsy, as if its tail were disjointed.

FAM.—COCCOTHAUSTINÆ.

GENUS, GEOSPIZA, Gould.

Corporis figura brevissima et robusta.

Rostrum magnum, robustum, validum, altitudine longitudinem præstante; culmine arcuato et capitis verticem superante, apice sine denticulo, lateribus tumidis.

Naribus basalibus et semitectis plumis frontalibus.

Mandibulâ superiori tomis medium versus sinum exhibentibus, ad mandibulâ inferioris processum recipiendum. Mandibula inferior ad basin lata, hoc infra oculos tendente.

Alæ mediocres remige primo paulo brevior secundo, hoc longissimo.

Cauda brevissima et æqualis.

Tarsi magni et validi, digito postico, cum ungue robusto et digito intermedio brevior; digitis externis inter se æqualibus at digito postico brevioribus. Color in maribus niger, in fœm. fuscus.

This singular genus* appears to be confined to the islands of the Galapagos Archipelago. It is very numerous, both in individuals and in species, so that it forms the most striking feature in their ornithology. The characters of the species of Geospiza, as well as of the following allied subgenera, run closely into each other in a most remarkable manner.

In my Journal of Researches, p. 475, I have given my reasons for believing that in some cases the separate islands possess their own representatives of the different species, and this almost necessarily would cause a fine gradation in their characters. Unfortunately I did not suspect this fact until it was too late to distinguish the specimens from the different islands of the group; but from the collection made for Captain FitzRoy, I have been able in some small measure to rectify this omission.

In each species of these genera a perfect gradation in colouring might, I think, be formed from one jet black to another pale brown. My observations showed that the former were invariably the males; but Mr. Bynoe, the surgeon of the Beagle, who opened many specimens, assured me that he found two quite black specimens of one of the smaller species of Geospiza, which certainly were females: this, however, undoubtedly is an exception to the general fact; and is analogous to those cases, which Mr. Blyth* has recorded of female linnets and some other birds, in a state of high constitutional vigour, assuming the brighter plumage of the male. The jet black birds, in cases, where there could be no doubt in regard to the species, were in singularly few proportional numbers to the brown ones: I can only account for this by the supposition that the intense black colour is attained only by three-year-old birds. I may here mention, that the time of year (beginning of October) in which my collection was made, probably corresponds, as far as the purposes of incubation are concerned, with our autumn. The several species of Geospiza are undistinguishable from each other in habits; they often form, together with the species of the following subgenera, and likewise with doves, large irregular flocks. They frequent the rocky and extremely arid parts of the land sparingly covered with almost naked bushes, near the coasts;

* This genus, and the following sub-genera, were named by Mr. Gould at a meeting of the Zool. Soc. Jan. 10 1837, p. 4. of Proceedings.

† Remarks on the Plumage of Birds, Charlsworth's Mag. of Nat. History, vol. i. p. 480.